

# absolute india

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## FIRST EVER "MADE IN INDIA" COMMERCIAL AIRCRAFT TO START FLYING TODAY

# INDIGENIZATION

► THE FIRST EVER "MADE IN INDIA" 17-SEATER DORNIER AIRCRAFT WOULD BE PRESSED INTO ITS MAIDEN SERVICE LINKING FIVE REMOTE TOWNS OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH TO ASSAM'S DIBRUGARH.

► ACCORDING TO HAL SOURCES, THE 17-SEATER NON-PRESSURIZED DORNIER 228 WITH AN AC CABIN IS CAPABLE OF DAY AND NIGHT OPERATIONS. THE LIGHT TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT WILL FACILITATE REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY IN NORTH-EASTERN STATES.



Two important development will take place today - First flight of Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) - Made in India- Dornier Do-228 from Dibrugarh in Assam to Pasighat town in Arunachal Pradesh by Alliance Air, making it India's only first commercial airline to fly Indian made aircraft for civil operations and inauguration of first FTO (Flying Training Organization) for North Eastern Region at Lilabari, Assam.

Team Absolute | Itanagar

The first-ever "Made in India" commercial aircraft will start flying from today and will provide air connectivity to remote towns of Arunachal Pradesh.

In what would be a red letter day in the history of Indian aviation, this will further boost air connectivity of North Eastern Region with the rest of the country.

Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) has approved a Scheme- "Providing air connectivity and Aviation infrastructure in North Eastern Region (NER)" to promote air connectivity in the states of North Eastern Region and, if required, to develop infrastructure for air connectivity.

Both events will be attended by the Civil Aviation Minister, Jyotiraditya Scindia and the Chief Ministers of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh, Himanta Biswa Sarma and Pema Khandu will also be present.

These two aircraft were handed over to Alliance Air on last Thursday and one has been shifted to Dibrugarh airport, the newest hub for Alliance air.

The aircrafts will be used to give air connectivity to remote places of eastern Arunachal Pradesh including some areas close to China and Myanmar borders.

The Advanced Landing Grounds (ALG) maintained by Indian Air Force will be used for landing, official added.

Alliance Air will initially be flying from Dibrugarh to Pasighat. And in the next 15 to 20 days, it will fly to Tezu and then to Ziro, both towns in Arunachal Pradesh. All of this will happen in the first phase.

In the second phase, it will connect Vijaynagar, Mechuka, Along and other places will be linked, a top official of Ministry of civil aviation said. All these places in eastern Arunachal Pradesh needed 1-5 days of travel to reach the nearest airports of Dibrugarh and Lilabari in Assam, officials further added.

Development of North Eastern

**New Delhi:** India on Monday successfully flight-tested anti-tank guided missile Helina, which was launched from an indigenously-developed helicopter, at high-altitude ranges.

The flight-test was jointly conducted by team of scientists of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), the Indian Army, and the Indian Air Force, as part of the user validation trials. The flight trials were conducted from an Advanced Light

Region (NER) is not only of strategic importance, but, is a part of India's growth story. Connectivity in North Eastern Region is very essential and Under "Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik (UDAN)", the Regional Connectivity

**INDIA SUCCESSFULLY FLIGHT-TESTS ANTI-TANK GUIDED MISSILE HELINA**

Helicopter (ALH) and the missile was fired successfully engaging simulated tank target. Guided by an Infrared Imaging Seeker (IIR) operating in the Lock on Before Launch mode, the missile is one of the most advanced anti-tank weapons in the world.

In continuation to validation trials conducted at Pokhran, proof of efficacy at high altitudes paves the way for its integration on the ALH. The trials were witnessed by senior Army commanders and senior scientists of DRDO.

Scheme (RCS), Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) has identified North Eastern Region as a priority area. This has helped in enhancing inter and intra connectivity for the North Eastern Region.

In this regard, new airports are getting developed and old airports are getting upgraded. Considering the hilly terrain, helicopter operations under UDAN scheme have been given focus for connectivity.

## 40 e-scooters of Jitendra EV catch fire, company launches probe

Team Absolute | New Delhi

There is no stopping fires in electric vehicles (EVs) and now, reports have surfaced that at least 40 electric two-wheelers belonging to Jitendra Electric Vehicles caught fire in Nashik.

According to a CNBC-TV18 report, 40 electric scooters of Jitendra Electric Vehicles, a Shah group's venture, caught fire in a transport container in Nashik on April 9.

The company was investigating what led to the fire. The container with 40 EVs was en route to Bengaluru.

"We are investigating the root cause and will come up with the findings in the coming days," the company was quoted as saying.

No one was injured in the incident. The latest EV fire joins the growing list of such incidents - five so far -- in just two weeks -- forcing the government to initiate a probe.

The government last week decided to call technical teams of Ola Electric and Okinawa Scooter for an explanation on recent fires in their EVs, after an independent expert probe is completed soon.

After Ola Electric and Okinawa e-scooters caught fire and raised alarms in government circles, another electric scooter of Hyderabad-based Pure EV caught fire in Tamil Nadu.

The company said it was investigating the incident. The Okinawa e-bike went up tragically in flames due to an electrical short-circuit in Vellore in Tamil Nadu, leading to two fatalities.

Okinawa Autotech had said that they adhere to the highest quality standards in their electric scooters. "This particular case has further brought to light how important it is for users to understand the correct usage and charging guidelines for EVs," the company said in a statement.

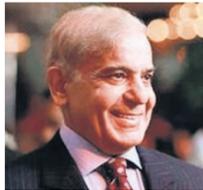
The battery manufacturers are cautious and are assuring exhaustive tests and technology to deal with the overheating issue.



## Shehbaz Sharif elected as 23rd Prime Minister of Pakistan

Islamabad | Agencies

PML-N President Shehbaz Sharif was on Monday elected as the 23rd Prime Minister of Pakistan with 174 lawmakers voting in his favour after the MNAs of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf boycotted the election, Dawn reported. Earlier, PTI MNAs had walked out of the Assembly, with Shah Mahmood Qureshi, who was the party's candidate for the top post, announcing that they would be resigning en masse from the National Assembly. PML-N's Ayaz Sadiq presided over the session after Deputy Speaker



Qasim Suri said his conscience did not allow him to conduct the session. Announcing the results, Sadiq reminded that he had also chaired the session during which PML-N supreme and Shehbaz's elder brother, Nawaz Sharif, was elected as the Prime Minister. "And today, I have the honour of chairing the

session for Shehbaz Sharif's election," he said. As soon as Sadiq announced the results and said Shehbaz is the new Prime Minister of Pakistan, lawmakers began shouting slogans in favour of Shehbaz and Nawaz.

The Speaker asked Shehbaz to move to the seat of the Prime Minister in the House and he shifted to the treasury benches amid cheers, with other members of the former joint opposition following suit. Shehbaz said it is the first time in Pakistan's history that a no-confidence motion against a Prime Minister has been successful. "And good has prevailed over evil," he said.

## FIVE DEPUTY CMS IN JAGAN'S NEW MINISTRY

**Amaravati:** Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy's reconstituted Cabinet has five Deputy Chief Ministers.

Like in his first Cabinet constituted after coming to power in 2019, he has appointed five deputies belonging to different sections of people in the revamped council of ministers. Amjad Basha and Narayana Swamy are the only ministers who retained the posts of Deputy Chief Ministers in the new Cabinet. Amjad Basha will look after the minority welfare department while Narayana Swamy will handle the excise portfolio.

Other deputy CMs are Muthyala Naidu (Panchayat Raj and Rural Development), Kittu Satyanarayana (Endowments) and Rajanna Dora (Tribal Welfare). The Chief Minister distributed portfolios among all 25 ministers who took oath earlier in the day.

## LEMON PRICES SHOOT UP, LEMONADE OUT OF REACH

Lucknow | Agencies

As old saying goes, "When life gives you lemons, make lemonade". But what does one do when lemons become out of reach of the common man? Surely one cannot hope to make lemonade.

With lemon selling at Rs 325 per kilogram and Rs 13 per piece in Lucknow, the zing and the tang has gone out of food.

The twist of lemon in Dal tadka, a sprinkle on tandoori chicken and the tang in salads has gone out. Lemonade, popularly known as 'shikanji', is no longer served to guests in the scorching heat.

While the high price has forced the ordinary people



to cut down the consumption drastically, many roadside dhabas and take-away eateries have stopped serving lemons.

"Chaat" sellers say that customers are staying away because we cannot afford to use lemon and the taste obviously suffers.

"My consumption of lemon was around four

kilograms every day but now with the prices shooting up, I cannot afford to buy them. I am substituting lemon with 'amchoor' powder but the taste is not the same," says Prathmesh Shukla, who runs a popular 'chaat' stall in Hazratganj.

Lemons are also flying off salad platters in luxury

restaurants. "We serve lemon slices only on demand. Otherwise, we are not including it in the salad platter," disclosed the food manager of a five-star hotel.

Small restaurants and canteens have increased the prices of lemon drinks and taken them off the salad plates. President of the Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Association, Girish Oberoi, said, "Small hotels have stopped serving lemon."

Oberoi said that the sudden escalation in prices was mainly due to hike in fuel prices and also low output. He said that he did not know when and how the prices of lemon would come down.

## AT JUST 3-7%, UPI USAGE PRETTY DISMAL IN RURAL INDIA: REPORT

► "PAYING FOR GOODS AND SERVICES IN STORES ACCOUNTS FOR 40 PER CENT OF ALL TRANSACTIONS. THE UPI USAGE IS HIGHEST IN HOTELS, PROVISION STORES AND HARDWARE STORES," THE FINDINGS SHOWED.

► WHILE 11 PER CENT OF THE UPI TRANSACTIONS ARE LOANS OR REPAYMENTS BETWEEN INDIVIDUALS, 6 PER CENT ARE CASH PASS-THROUGH PAYMENTS INTENDED FOR SOMEONE ELSE, WITHOUT A UPI.

► BY DRIVING AWARENESS ON UPI AND HANDHOLDING CONSUMERS DO THEIR FIRST UPI TRANSACTION THROUGH ITS NETWORK, IBRIDGE EXPECTS THAT IT CAN DRIVE UP THE UPI USAGE IN RURAL INDIA TO 20-25 PER CENT OVER THE NEXT 12 MONTHS.

Bengaluru | Agencies

Despite crossing 5 billion transactions in a month for the first time in March, a new report said on Monday that the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) is yet to penetrate rural India where the usage is a dismal 3-7 per cent.

Nearly 40 per cent of rural consumers who were surveyed revealed that they are unaware of UPI and digital payments and don't know how to use it, including expressing fears of losing their money through such payments, according to leading village commerce networks IBridge.



Around 20 per cent of them expressed a preference for cash-based payments while 10 per cent

cited low bank balance or inactive bank accounts as reasons for no UPI experience. The company tracked

thousands of UPI transactions from a group of rural consumers in a specific 30-day period. An analysis of the data showed that the average transaction value was Rs 1,450. IBridge operates in more than 10,000 villages across 77 districts through a network of over 10,000 local entrepreneurs.

According to the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), UPI had processed 5.04 billion transactions till March 29, amounting to Rs 8.88 trillion.

This was 11.5 per cent higher than the volume of transactions processed in February and 7.5 per cent higher in terms of value of transactions processed.

## Maruti to fulfil CNG demand now, EVs in 2025

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Automaker Maruti Suzuki is currently focused on the CNG segment to fulfil the demand triggered by rising petrol prices as well as heightened concerns over environmental protection. The automobile major also plans to foray into the EV segment by 2025. In a conversation with reporter, Maruti Suzuki India's Senior Executive Director, Sales and Marketing, Shashank Srivastava, said that demand for CNG cars has gone up dramatically due to the favourable cost of running such vehicles. "At current prices, the running cost of a petrol car is around Rs 5.25 for a kilometre; for CNG it is one third of the cost of petrol," Srivastava said. "We are trying to get our production numbers in line with the consumer demands for CNG. Year before last, we sold 106,000 CNG cars; last year we sold 162,000; this year we will be doing 235,000 with an intent to fur-



ther raise the bar in 2023," he added. Notably, the company does not produce any diesel car and only offers petrol and CNG fuelled models. Till now, the company has not disclosed the specifications of its upcoming EV. Besides, he said that at present, the segment faces high acquisition cost and unavailability of large-scale charging infrastructure. In addition, the company plans to increase its share of the fast-growing SUV segment.



# India declares Pulwama attack accused Mohiuddin Alamgir as 'designated terrorist'

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India on Monday declared Mohiuddin Aurangzeb Alamgir, a member of Pakistan-based terror organisation Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) who was involved in the Pulwama attack of 2019, as a designated terrorist.

Alamgir looks after JeM's fund collection activities and routes the said fund to Kashmir. He has been involved in facilitating infiltration of Afghan cadres and coordinating terror attacks on Indian security forces in Jammu and Kashmir.

Born on January 1, 1983, Alamgir is a resident of Bahawalpur in Pakistan's Punjab province.

The Ministry of Home Affairs issued a notification declaring Alamgir as individual terrorist under



the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967.

The Ministry said that Alamgir is also known by various names such

as Maktab Ameer, Mujahid Bhai, Muhammad Bhai, M Ammar and Abu Ammar Madam.

Alamgir was involved in the

Pulwama terror attack which killed 40 CRPF personnel in 2019.

On February 14, 2019, Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) had orchestrated an attack on the convoy of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) at Pulwama in Jammu and Kashmir, killing 40 personnel of the force. Days after the attack, Indian warplanes struck the biggest terrorist training camp of JeM deep inside Pakistan's Balakot in retaliation to the dastardly terror attack.

The National Investigation Agency (NIA), which is probing the terror case, has named JeM chief Masood Azhar, his brother Abdul Rauf Asghar, slain terrorist Mohammad Umar Farooq, suicide bomber Adil Ahmed Dar and other terrorist commanders operating from Pakistan as accused in the case.

# 'Cannot do anything..': Nitish rules out relief on fuel prices

Patna | Agencies

Position to give any relief to common people on fuel prices. "There is no doubt that people are feeling the pinch due to the hike in fuel prices. (However) we do not have resources in the state government to give immediate relief to common people. It is a subject of the Centre. We cannot do anything in this matter... to reduce prices of fuel," he said in an interaction with media persons after Janata Darbar on Monday.

"We had given relief a few months ago. Suddenly, the fuel prices increase across the country. Now, it is not possible to reduce prices at the state level again," he said.

The Bihar government had reduced state VAT during the run-up to Uttar Pradesh Assembly election when Centre had reduced VAT of petrol and diesel and also asked states to reduce state VATs as well. "There are several projects currently underway in the state and a big amount involved in it. We are already having a lack of resources in the state," Nitish Kumar said. "The pandemic had



deeply hurt the financial earning of the state. We are in the process of recovery in the last one year," he said. On the pollution of Ganga, Nitish Kumar said that when was a child, he used to go to the river for a bath. "We not only took a bath in the Ganga river but also take water for drinking. Nowadays, the water of Ganga is not consumable. Hence, a large number of people are using ground water which is a wrong practice and its consequences may appear in future. Hence, we are making efforts to purify water from the Ganga river and supply it to every household for drinking," he said. "We are currently supplying water from Ganga at some places and I am trying to start the big project from Patna and expand it to other districts like Gaya, Biharsharif, Nawada etc," he said.

# 6-8 lakh pilgrims expected at this year's Amarnath Yatra

Srinagar | Agencies

The Amarnath pilgrimage this year will be historic as 6 to 8 lakh pilgrims are expected to perform the Yatra this year, Union Information and Broadcasting Secretary Apurva Chand said on Monday.

Talking to reporters here, he said that this year, Amarnath Yatra will be one of the biggest yatras in the history of J&K as around 6-8 lakh pilgrims are expected to arrive on the pilgrimage.

"Today, I met the officials of the administration including Divisional Commissioner and Deputy Commissioners. We were



told that this year it will be a historic pilgrimage and for that all the necessary arrangements have been put in place." About the weather chal-

lenges faced by the pilgrims during the Amarnath Yatra, he said these challenges were natural and out of the hands of officials supervising the Yatra.

# No reason to worry until new variant of concern detected: Minister

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Delhi Health Minister Satyendra Jain on Monday said that the World Health Organisation has not declared any new variant of concern of coronavirus yet, so there is no reason to worry.

Noting that around 100-200 Covid cases are being reported in the capital city daily, he said: "There is no need to focus on positivity rate as the norms have changed. Earlier we used to focus... but now 10 per cent positivity rate is the new mark.

"The rate of hospitalisation is an important point to be focused... (it) is going down in the city."

On new Covid variant XE, Jain said that there is no need to create panic till any variant gets labelled as



Variant of Concern. "Due to mutation in virus, many

variants of Covid will appear, but it is not matter of concern till WHO

declares it as Variant of Concern. Covid seems to continue for next four to five years," he added.

About precautions doses for all adults, he said that Delhi has complete preparation for administering the dose. For now it has been started in private centres, but government hospitals are also prepared to administer the dose, he said.

"In private hospitals, precaution doses can't be made available free of cost, but we will make it available free in government hospitals," he said.

To a question on the JNU violence, Jain said: "I am the Home Minister of Delhi. You should ask this question to the Home Minister under whom the Delhi Police is."

He, however, termed, the incident "unfortunate".

# Kharge, questioned in National Herald case, can be summoned again

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha, Mallikarjuna Kharge of the Congress was on Monday questioned by the Enforcement Directorate (ED), in connection with a Prevention of Money Laundering case pertaining to the National Herald case.

Kharge had reached the ED headquarters in Lutyen's Delhi at around 11 a.m. where a team of officials questioned him.

He was later allowed to go by the probe agency. Kharge did not speak to the media and the ED also did not issue any statement in this respect.

What is the whole matter:

According to the Income Tax investigation, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi filed his income tax report on July 27, 2011 in which he did show a growth of Rs 68 lakhs through property and other sources. In 2015 the Income Tax Department moved a plea of tax evasion against Rahul Gandhi and others. The 99.1 percent equity of Associated Journals Limited was transferred to Young Indian where Gandhi was one of the directors.

The report said that AJL was an unlisted company which publishes the National Herald, Navjivan and an Urdu daily.

The IT department had said that Gandhi had shares of YI, even when he filed his income tax return (ITR) in 2011 he was holding his shares. Despite this Rahul Gandhi did not show that he was having shares of YI in his ITR. The IT department had accused Gandhi of knowingly hiding the fact that he was having shares of YI and was holding the post of director. The All India Congress Committee gave a loan of Rs 90.21



crore to AJL which was later transferred to YI as a Rs 50 lakh loan. It was thus a matter of tax evasion. Later it was also found in the investigation that 9,02,168,980 shares of AJL having a value of Rs 10 each were auctioned to YI. The AJL had properties across India, in Delhi, Mumbai, Patna, Panchkula, Lucknow. And YI became the owner of these properties after getting the shares of AJL.

This Young India company was incorporated on 23 November 2010 with a capital value of Rs five lakh. On December 13, 2010, Gandhi became one of the directors of YI. Sonia Gandhi and her son Rahul Gandhi were jointly holding 76 percent shares of YI whereas 12 percent shares were given to Motilal Vohra and Oscar Fernandes was having the rest 12 percent shares.

# Two arrested in Bengal for gangrape of woman

Kolkata | Agencies

Two out of three persons accused of raping a woman in West Bengal's South 24 Parganas district were arrested on Monday, the police said.

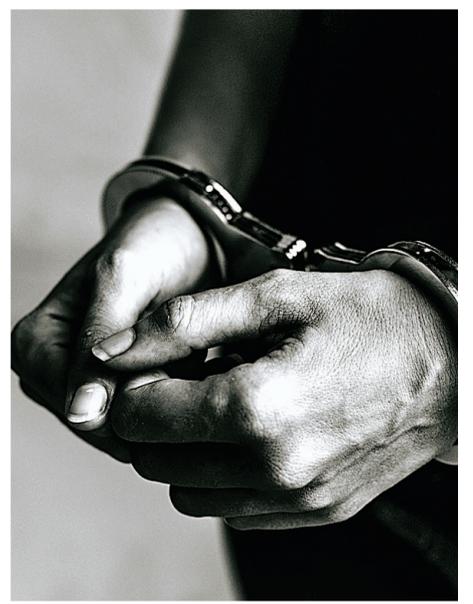
One of the arrested persons -- Amal Khatua is the brother-in-law of the victim. The other person, Kartik Maiti, is a close associate of Khatua. The third accused is absconding. The incident has been reported from Namkhana.

After the alleged gangrape, the accused tried to set the woman on fire. Later, she was shifted to the Kakkdip sub-divisional hospital.

On Monday morning, after regaining consciousness, she gave a statement to the police accusing Khatua, Maiti and one of his associates of raping her.

She said that the victim's husband used to stay in Bakkhali for work.

She told the police that her brother-in-law was often offering her "indecent proposals" in her husband's absence. On late Friday night (April 7), according to the woman, the accused first



took turns to violate her, and then tried to kill her. As she began screaming and yelling, the people residing in the nearby houses had gathered. In the meantime, the accused went abscond-

ing. Underbans district police superintendent, Bhaskar ukhopadhyay said: "Two of the accused have already been arrested. The third accused will also be arrested soon," he said.

# Cong issues show cause notices to Jakhar, Thomas

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Congress disciplinary committee, which met here on Monday to look into the complaints against K.V. Thomas and Sunil Jakhar, has issued show cause notices to both.

Party General Secretary, Tariq Anwar said, "As per the procedure, the show cause notice has been issued and they have been given a week's time to respond and after that the disciplinary committee will meet again."

Jakhar is former Punjab Congress President and Thomas was a former Union Minister from Kerala. Both have been once blue-eyed boys of the party leadership.

While Sunil Jakhar had spoken about former Punjab Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi, Thomas participated in a CPI-M meet. Both the cases are being probed by the party disciplinary committee headed by A.K. Antony, sources said.

Thomas has been upset with the party since he was denied the Rajya Sabha seat and Sunil Jakhar was making critical remarks after he was overlooked for the Punjab chief minister's post.

Jakhar's comments have offended the Dalit leaders in the party, and Udit Raj even demanded his expulsion, "Sunil Jakhar, Punjab Cong leader, must be expelled from the Party for His place is in a

feet instead of on head."

The Congress leaders from Kerala have been seeking Thomas's immediate removal following his participation in a seminar on the Centre-state relations held as part of the 23rd party congress of the CPI-M. The CPI-M had as part of its 23rd party Congress invited Dr. Shashi Tharoor and Prof. K.V. Thomas to participate in the seminar. K. Sudhakaran immediately informed both the leaders not to participate and even the party president Sonia Gandhi intervened in the matter and told the leaders not to participate. While Shashi Tharoor backed out, K.V. Thomas decided to go ahead with the seminar.

## MASSIVE FIRE BREAKS OUT IN GHAZIABAD, 20 COWS CHARRED TO DEATH

New Delhi: A massive fire broke out at a slum area in Ghaziabad's Kinauni village on Monday, resulting in the death of around 20 cows, an official said. Speaking to reporters at the site of the incident, Ghaziabad District Magistrate Rakesh Kumar Singh said that prima facie it looks like around 15-20 cows have been charred to death. While the exact number of cattle casualties is yet to be ascertained, several people present on the spot said that over 50 cows have been charred to death. The DM said that an enquiry has been ordered into the incident to bring out the exact cause of the fire.

# 2 terrorists killed, 2 police personnel injured in encounter at J&K's Kulgam

Srinagar | Agencies

Two terrorists have been killed and two police personnel injured in an ongoing encounter between terrorists and security forces on Monday at Khurbatpora area of Kashmir's Kulgam district, police said.

"One Pakistani terrorist (code name Chacha) and one hybrid terrorist killed. Two police personnel also injured. They are being evacuated to hospital. Encounter going on," Jammu and Kashmir police tweeted quoting Inspector General Police, Vijay Kumar.

The firefight between the terrorists and security forces took place after the security



forces cordoned off the area and launched a search operation on the basis of specific information about the presence of terrorists. As the

security forces zeroed in on the spot where the terrorists were hiding, they came under heavy fire that triggered the encounter.

## CHANGE OF NAME

I DHONDU JAIRAM BORSE is legally father of No. 15696621X HAV PATIL UMESH DHONDU presently residing at dattane Teh- Shindkheda Dist Dhule Pin - 425404 have changed my name from DHONDU to DHONDU JAIRAM BORSE and change my DOB from 01/07/1960 to 25/05/1960 vide affidavit No. 6575/14/02/2022 and date 14/02/2022 before Shindkheda court.

## CHANGE OF NAME

I VIJAYABAI DHONDU BORSE is legally mother of No. 15696621X HAV PATIL UMESH DHONDU presently residing at dattane Teh- Shindkheda Dist Dhule Pin - 425404 have changed my name from VIJAYABAI to VIJAYABAI DHONDU BORSE and changed my DOB from 01/07/1968 to 01/06/1966 vide affidavit No. 6575/14/02/2022 and date 14/02/2022 before Shindkheda court.



# CHIEF MINISTER TAKES STOCK OF SITUATION IN VIOLENCE-HIT AREAS

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Monday held a high-level meeting with top bureaucrats and the Director General of Police(DGP) to take stock of the situation in communal violence-hit areas of Madhya Pradesh that occurred during the Ram Navami festival celebration.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Monday held a high-level meeting with top bureaucrats and the Director General of Police(DGP) to take stock of the situation in communal violence-hit areas of Madhya Pradesh that occurred during the Ram Navami festival celebration.

After the meeting, Chouhan said persons involved in stone pelting and creating communal violence have been identified and strict action would be taken against them. Apart from DGP, the chief secretary, principal secretary of state home department, ADG Intelligence etc were present during the briefing.

"Those have pelted stones and damaged public-private properties will not

be spared. There is no place for communal violence in Madhya Pradesh. Apart from taking punitive action, we will also do recovery of public-private properties damaged during the violence," Chouhan added.

Communal violence occurred in Khargone district during the Ram Navami festival celebration on Sunday. Stones were pelted on the procession of Ram Navami, which sparked a communal violence between the two communities. As per official reports, at least 24 people, including six policemen, were injured in the violence. The local administration has already imposed 144 CrPC and heavy police personnel have been deployed in the Khargone city area.

Exams of school children and college students that were scheduled on

Monday were postponed till the situation returned to normal in the city.

The local administration has already imposed 144 CrPC and heavy police personnel have been deployed in the Khargone city area. However, exams in other areas in the district will continue.

People in the city are allowed to visit the market only for emergency medical services while for other urgent work they need to take permission from the local police station or the district administration offices.

A similar alleged stone-pelting incident was also reported during a Ram Navami procession in Sendhwa town of Barwani district where a police station in-charge and five others were injured. The situation was later brought under control, according to officials.

# Communal violence in MP during Ram Navami celebrations

COMMUNAL VIOLENCE ERUPTED IN AT LEAST TWO DISTRICTS OF MADHYA PRADESH DURING THE RAM NAVAMI CELEBRATIONS ON SUNDAY.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Communal violence erupted in at least two districts of Madhya Pradesh during the Ram Navami celebrations on Sunday.

The first incident of violence was reported in Khargone district, where nearly half-a-dozen police personnel got injured while a similar incident occurred in Sendhwa town of Barwani district.

In Khargone, stones were hurled at a Ram Navami pro-



cession, triggering incidents of arson wherein some vehicles were set on fire, prompting authorities to clamp curfew in three areas and section 144 of CrPC in the entire city. Police fired tear gas shells to control the situation.

Some police personnel and people were injured during stone-pelting as per the preliminary information. The procession was attacked by people from a particular community, who objected to

playing loud DJ music during the procession. This resulted into confrontation between two communities (Hindu-Muslim), following which stone pelting was reported. Police had to face tough situations and tear gases were used to disperse the people creating ruckus. Additional forces from some other local police stations were alerted and deployed to the spot.

Senior police officials and district administration joint-

ly acted on it and the situation was brought under control, a police personnel told IANS.

Khargone district administration late on Sunday appealed to the people to restrain from spreading rumours and do not pay attention to any kind of misleading information.

"The situation in the city is under control now. Do not pay attention to any kind of rumour and misleading information," S.S. Mujald, additional collector of Khargone, said in an appeal late on Sunday.

Similar violence also reported from Sendhwa town of Barwani district during Ram Navami procession. At least five-six people, including a police inspector, got injured in the incident. A place of worship was also vandalized. The situation in the district was under control by late evening, a police officer said.

# MP Govt initiates action against Khargone rioters, Cong questions Kapil Mishra's visit

MOVING QUICKLY IN AN INCIDENT OF COMMUNAL VIOLENCE THAT BROKE OUT ON SUNDAY DURING THE RAM NAVAMI PROCESSION IN MADHYA PRADESH'S KHARGONE DISTRICT, THE POLICE HAVE SO FAR ARRESTED 77 PERSONS INVOLVED IN STONE PELTING, SETTING FIRE TO PUBLIC-PRIVATE PROPERTIES AND CREATING A RUCKUS.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Moving quickly in an incident of communal violence that broke out on Sunday during the Ram Navami procession in Madhya Pradesh's Khargone district, the police have so far arrested 77 persons involved in stone pelting, setting fire to public-private properties and creating a ruckus.

In a joint operation by the district administration and the police, several buildings were bulldozed in the Khargone city area where the incidents took place. Nearly half-a-dozen JCB

machines (bulldozers) started demolishing the illegal buildings of rioters.

The action came soon after Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan held a meeting with Direction General of Police (DGP) Sudhir Kumar Saxena and other top bureaucrats including the chief secretary and the principal secretary of the state home department in Bhopal on Monday.

"No place for rioters in MP. Rioters have been identified, who will not only be put behind bars, but damage to properties will be recovered from them. The MP government has enacted a law to recover damages to public and private properties. A Claim Tribunal is being constituted. The loss caused by rioters to properties will be ascertained and recovered from identified rioters," Chouhan said after the meeting, adding that he has ordered immediate action in the matter.

The buildings were demolished amidst heavy police presence with the area cordoned off and Section 144 being imposed in the city.

While the administrative and police action against the rioters continued in the areas where violence occurred, politics also heated up in the state. Senior Congress leader and former chief minister Digvijaya Singh held the Khargone district administration and the

police responsible for the violence.

The Congress leaders questioned the demolition of the buildings, arguing that action should have been taken only after an investigation into the matter. "Is it fair to punish everyone by finding them guilty without investigation?" Digvijaya Singh said.

Singh raised questions about the presence of BJP leader Kapil Mishra in Khargone on Sunday when the incident took place and has demanded an inquiry about his visit to the state. Mishra was on a day's visit to Khargone district.

Hitting back at Singh, Kapil Mishra said that people like him (Digvijaya) have started spreading lies to save those who are responsible for the violence in Khargone. "One who called Kasab a Hindu again started spreading lies. There was no riot where I was. And yes, if the investigation is done then only the name of a jihadi and a Congressman hiding behind him will come out in every riot."

Congress leader and MLA from Khargone city Ravi Joshi who visited the spot on Monday, has welcomed the state government's action against the rioters and has demanded an independent probe into the matter. He said the presence of BJP leader Kapil Mishra in Khargone and the violence

were not just a coincidence but it indicates a pre-planned conspiracy. Talking to IANS Joshi said, "Being the MLA of Khargone city, I visited the spot and took stock of the situation, meeting senior police officials and also administrative officials of Khargone. I welcome the state government's action against rioters, but the presence of Kapil Mishra should be investigated."

Meanwhile, state home minister Narottam Mishra talking to a reporter in Bhopal said, "Jis ghar se pathar aae hai, us ghar ko hi patharo kaa dher banaenge (the house where the stones came from will be turned into a pile of stones itself)."

According to the police, a clash broke out near Talab Chowk mosque when some people opposed the provocative songs being played during the procession. Videos of the incident showed a mob pelting stones at the mosque and the homes close to it. The police are seen dispersing the mob.

When the incident happened, BJP leader Kapil Mishra was in Khargone (to attend the Shriram Janmotsav Shobha Yatra procession. Sharing photos on Twitter, he wrote, "Na Musa na Burhan, Bas Jai Shree Ram. Hamari Ram Navami yatra Khargone, Madhya Pradesh, me shuru."

# EXAMS POSTPONED IN VIOLENCE-HIT AREA IN MP'S KHARGONE

The communal violence which took place during the Ram Navami celebrations in Madhya Pradesh's Khargone district has prompted the local administration to postpone school and college exams scheduled for Monday.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The communal violence which took place during the Ram Navami celebrations in Madhya Pradesh's Khargone district has prompted the local administration to postpone school and college exams scheduled for Monday.

The administration, however, also made it clear that the exams centres will be closed only in the Khargone city area where communal clashes occurred on Sunday while exams in other areas of the district will take place as per the schedule. The local administration

has already imposed 144 CrPC and heavy police personnel have been deployed in the Khargone city area. People in the city are allowed to visit the market only for emergency medical services while for other urgent work they need to take permission from the local police station or the district administration offices. "In Khargone city, Class 8, college graduation and postgraduation exams were to be held today. These exams have been postponed. These examinations will be conducted on the next order. Also, it is made clear that this order is only regarding the examination to be held at the examination centres of

Khargone city," said a notice issued by Khargone district administration on Monday.

The district administration has announced that apart from medical emergencies and for any urgent work, one can contact the SDM office, Tehsil office and Kotwali police station," the notification added.

It also warned that any kind of objectionable photos, videos and messages which surface on social media that can create panic and disrupt the situation would attract penal action against the person concerned and the WhatsApp group administrator.

Communal violence in Khargone city had

erupted during the procession of Ram Navami on Sunday.

Stones were hurled at a Ram Navami procession, triggering incidents of arson wherein some vehicles were set on fire, prompting authorities to clamp curfew in three areas and section 144 of CrPC in the entire city.

Police had to use tear gas shells to control the situation. During the violence, Khargone Superintendent of Police, Siddharth Choudhary was shot and injured as he tried to quell rioting. Choudhary received a bullet injury on his knee and was admitted to a hospital on Sunday.

# People like Digvijaya Singh spreading lies: Kapil Mishra on Khargone violence

HITTING BACK AT FORMER MADHYA PRADESH CHIEF MINISTER DIGVIJAYA SINGH, BJP LEADER KAPIL MISHRA ON MONDAY SAID THAT PEOPLE LIKE HIM HAVE STARTED SPREADING LIES TO SAVE THOSE WHO ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR VIOLENCE IN KHARGONE.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Hitting back at former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Digvijaya Singh, BJP leader Kapil Mishra on Monday said that people like him have started spreading lies to save those

who are responsible for violence in Khargone.

Quoting senior Singh's tweet, Mishra said, "One who called Kasab a Hindu again started spreading lies. There was no riot where I was. And yes, if the investigation is done then only name of a jihadi and a Congressman hiding behind him will come out in every riot. Jihadis pelted stones and set fire. People like Digvijaya have started spreading lies to save them."

Mishra told IANS that he was 40 kilometers away from the place where clashes took place. "I was in a village in another part of Khargone which is 40 kilometers from the place where violence erupted. The event I attended was peaceful and it can be checked from my timeline on social media," Mishra said.

Sharing a news report stating that BJP leader Mishra was present during the violence in the Ram Navami procession in Madhya Pradesh's

Khargone, Digvijaya Singh tweeted, "Wherever Kapil Mishra steps in, there were riots. Will it be investigated?." In Khargone, stones were hurled at a Ram Navami procession, triggering incidents of arson wherein some vehicles were set on fire, prompting authorities to clamp curfew in three areas and section 144 of CrPC in the entire city. Police fired tear gas shells to control the situation. Some police personnel and people were injured during the stone-pelting as per the preliminary information. The procession was attacked by the people from a particular community, who objected to playing loud DJ music during the procession. This resulted into confrontation between the two communities (Hindu-Muslim), following which stone pelting was reported. Police had to face tough situations and tear gas shells were used to disperse the people creating ruckus.

# 'Case of arrest not made out': SC on case against Vyapam whistleblower Rai

The Supreme Court on Monday observed that a case of arrest is not made out against Vyapam scam whistleblower, Anand Rai, in an FIR registered against him over an alleged defamatory Facebook post against the Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister's OSD, Laxman Singh Markam.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Monday observed that a case of arrest is not made out against Vyapam scam whistleblower, Anand Rai, in an FIR registered against him over an alleged defamatory Facebook post against the Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister's OSD, Laxman Singh Markam.

A bench of Justices DY Chandrachud and Surya Kant said: "We feel this was not a case of arrest. We would have granted him protection. But now he has secured bail."

The top court granted liberty to Rai to approach the Madhya Pradesh High Court under Section 482



CrPC, in the event of any charge sheet being filed against him in the FIR. The bench, however, noted that it was not stopping the investigation in the case against him. Rai was arrested by Madhya Pradesh Police on April 7, but he was granted bail on April 9. The top court was hearing a petition filed by Rai against the high court order declining to quash the FIR registered against him and vacating the interim order of protection granted to him in the case. During the hearing, the bench queried: "What does the Facebook post exactly mean?"

Senior advocate PS Patwalia, representing Markam, contended that Rai had used derogatory words against his client. Citing that Rai had been released on bail on April 9, Patwalia submitted that the investigation in the case should not be interdicted. Noting that Rai has been granted bail, the bench told his counsel, senior advocate Kapil Sibal that he can be given liberty to challenge the charge sheet, if it is filed.

"I thought this was a case of protecting you from arrest but now that stage is gone...." On April 9, Rai's lawyer sought urgent hearing on the petition in the top court stating that his client was arrested from Delhi by MP Police. Last week, the high court dismissed a plea filed by Rai in which he prayed to quash an FIR registered against him on a complaint by Markam. Rai and Congress leader K.K. Mishra had earlier claimed that Markam was involved in the MP-TET paper leak case. The duo had then claimed that the screenshot of a question-paper of MP-TET that went viral on social media was leaked from Markam's mobile phone. The allegation had then sparked controversy in the state.

In response to the allegations, Markam lodged an FIR against Rai and Mishra alleging that the duo had shared "misleading information" related to him on the paper leak. He had accused Rai of making objectionable social media posts.

# Another tiger dies in MP's Pench



YET ANOTHER TIGER WAS FOUND DEAD IN MADHYA PRADESH PUSHING THE TOTAL NUMBER OF BIG CATS TO HAVE DIED IN DIFFERENT WILDLIFE HABITATS OF THE STATE SO FAR THIS YEAR TO 15.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Yet another tiger was found dead in Madhya Pradesh pushing the total number of big cats to have died in different wildlife habitats of the state so far this year to 15.

A tiger was found dead at Pench Tiger Reserve (PTR) located in Seoni district of the state on Sunday. The officials are suspecting that it was killed by another feline during a territorial fight. This was the fourth tiger to be reported dead in PTR so far, this year, whereas this is the fifth in the state in a fortnight.

The carcass was spotted by a forest patrolling team on Sunday in Kurai range of the PTR, a wildlife officer told IANS on Monday.

"It appears the tiger was killed in a fight with another adult tiger. The attacking carnivore ate most of the carcass and blood stains were found nearby," officer said, adding that the dead tiger's front legs and teeth were intact, while its tail and hind legs along with nails were found nearby. A thorough investigation

was conducted with the help of a dog squad and there was no evidence of any suspicious activity at the spot, the official said.

On April 9, a patrolling team had spotted the presence of an adult big cat in the area and it is suspected that the tiger was killed by the same feline, he said.

Tiger state Madhya Pradesh has lost as many 15 tigers in the last four months in different wildlife habitats of the state, including five between April 1 to 11.

Of the total tigers reported dead, 11 had lost their lives within the earmarked area of tiger reserves, while four were reported dead outside the area.

On April 5, IANS had exclusively reported that as per the NTCA's data, overall, 39 tigers were reported dead across the country in the last four months (till April 4). Madhya Pradesh, like in the previous years, led with 14 tiger deaths, followed by Maharashtra with 10, while Karnataka was at third place with 6 tiger deaths.



EDITOR'S SPECS

### Azam Khan to quit SP?

The Samajwadi Party (SP) may soon face another major jolt as speculations about senior party leader Mohd Azam Khan leaving the party and, possibly, forming his own party, gained ground. Azam Khan's media in charge Fasaht Khan Shanu said, "Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath was right when he said that Akhilesh does not want Azam Khan to be out of jail." Fasaht made the remark at a meeting of Khan's supporters at the party office in Rampur, late on Sunday night. According to sources, Azam Khan has been upset over the fact that Akhilesh did not visit him in Sitapur jail-except once-where he is lodged since February 2020. Pragatisheel Samajwadi Party-Lohia (PSP-L) chief Shivpal Yadav's rift with Akhilesh and his possible shift to the ruling BJP has strengthened reports about Azam Khan also quitting SP. Azam Khan fought the 2022 Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections and won the Rampur seat for the 10th time from behind the bars in Sitapur jail. Fasaht said, "Now Akhilesh Yadav feels that our clothes stink." Interestingly, day ago, SP MP Shafiqur Rehman Barq had also alleged that SP was not working for Muslims. Azam Khan's wife Tazeen Fatima is an ex-MLA and former Rajya Sabha member while his son Abdullah Azam Khan won the Suar assembly seat in Rampur. Azam Khan has been winning the Rampur seat since 1980. He lost only in 1996 to the Congress. Tazeen Fatima won the Rampur seat when he vacated it after winning the Rampur Lok Sabha seat in 2019. On March 22, Azam Khan resigned as Rampur Lok Sabha member to retain his assembly seat. Meanwhile, an MLA known for his proximity to Azam Khan admitted that Khan was being increasingly side lined after Akhilesh took over the reins of power in the party in 2017 and even Mulayam Singh Yadav had been relegated to the wings.

# THE CLASH WITHIN THE CIVILIZATION

Asad Mirza

It seems as if the Russia-Ukraine war has rendered the seminal work by Samuel Huntington "The Clash of Civilizations", as completely wrong. As the narrative painted by him 30 years earlier, and which occupied the central place in the world politics particularly by the western liberals has not happened. Instead of a clash of the civilizations, it is now a clash within the civilization i.e. white, European and Orthodox Christians fighting amongst them.

In an interview to George Eaton for the New Statesman, political theorist Noam Chomsky describes the on going war between Russia and Ukraine as "monstrous" for Ukraine.

Chomsky, who has never condemned any anti-Western government, unhesitatingly denounces Russian President Vladimir Putin's "criminal aggression". But adds that to answer the question, one has to plumb the recesses of Putin's twisted mind and try to analyse his deep psyche.

"The other way would be to look at the facts: for example, that in September 2021 the US came out with a strong policy statement, calling for enhanced military cooperation with Ukraine, further sending of advanced military weapons, all part of the enhancement programme of Ukraine joining Nato. You can take your choice, we don't know which is right. What we do know is that Ukraine will be further devastated. And we may move on to terminal nuclear war if we do not pursue the opportunities that exist for a negotiated settlement," he further said in the interview.

Expressing his views on democracy and the US interpretation of democracy, Chomsky says that Putin is as concerned with democracy as we are. He said: "If it's possible to break out of the propaganda bubble for a few minutes, the US has a long record of undermining and destroying democracy. Do I have to run through it? Iran in 1953, Guatemala in 1954, Chile in 1973, on and on... But we are supposed to now honour and admire Washington's enormous commitment to sovereignty and democracy. What happened in history doesn't matter. That's for other people." Chomsky, who observed in 1990 that "if the Nuremberg laws were applied, then every post-war American president would have been hanged", spoke disdainfully of US President Joe Biden, saying: "It's certainly right to have moral outrage about Putin's actions in Ukraine, but it would be even more progress to have moral outrage about other



horrible atrocities... In Afghanistan, literally millions of people are facing imminent starvation. Why? There's food in the markets. But people who have little money have to watch their children starve because they can't go to the market to buy food. Why? Because the United States, with the backing of Britain, has kept Afghanistan's funds in New York banks and will not release them." Chomsky's contempt for the hypocrisies and contradictions of US foreign policy comes out very clearly in this interview, and in his usual style he has given words to the sentiments prevailing across the globe.

On the other hand the other leading political theorists of our times Francis Fukuyama, while speaking to Megan Gibson for New Statesman opined that we could be facing the end of "the end of history" On the recent political drama over presidential elections in the US, Fukuyama, describes the situation as serious, really, since the American Civil War. Commenting on the US's current political polarisation he says: "There's a significant chance we're going to be in a major constitutional crisis at the time of the next presidential election."

Fukuyama's critics point out that his thesis about liberal democracy being "the final form of human government" seems obsolete. In his

book "The End of History and the Last Man", he outlined his theory that liberal democracy is greatly preferable to any other form of government and, crucially, that no liberal democracy could progress to a better alternative.

Fukuyama commenting on the likely geopolitical consequences of the war in Ukraine, says that chief among his predictions are: Russia will lose the war, perhaps spectacularly, and this defeat will help the West get out of "our funk about the declining state of global democracy. The spirit of 1989 will live on, thanks to a bunch of brave Ukrainians. For those interested in the stability of the international order, it's an optimistic, even reassuring, vision of the war's potential outcome".

On the surge of global support for Ukraine, Fukuyama sympathises with and endorses the urge to support the Ukrainian plight, but he also warns that it's hardly a universal phenomenon, even among seemingly democratic countries. He cites India and South Africa as two countries that have so far refused to condemn Russia's invasion. Fukuyama also opines that while different opinions might be tolerable, they have also once again highlighted the dysfunction of certain multilateral bodies, like, the UN. His "ultimate nightmare", he said, is a world in which China and Russia

work in harness with one another, perhaps with China bolstering Russia's war and Beijing launching its own invasion of Taiwan. If that were to happen, and be successful, Fukuyama said "then you would really be living in a world that was being dominated by these non-democratic powers. If the US and the rest of the West couldn't stop that from happening, then that really is the end of the end of history".

Analysing the views expressed by the two giants one can only say that the wrong interpretation of liberal democracy and its implementation through force might have resulted in the erosion of the democratic concepts all over the world. Its main champions US and UK both seem to be faltering and trying to impose their will or version of the concept with use of force, which may ultimately result in the establishment of a non-democratic global system, instead of the new world order which the so-called western liberalised world is trying to implement.

(Asad Mirza is a political commentator based in New Delhi. The views expressed are personal)

## international

## PTI TO RESIGN EN MASSE FROM PAK NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, BOYCOTT PM ELECTION

The Pakistan Tehreek-Insaf (PTI) has decided to boycott the election of the new Prime Minister and resign en masse from the National Assembly, said senior party leader Fawad Chaudhry after a parliamentary meeting of the party on Monday, media reports said.

Islamabad | Agencies

The Pakistan Tehreek-Insaf (PTI) has decided to boycott the election of the new Prime Minister and resign en masse from the National Assembly, said senior party leader Fawad Chaudhry after a parliamentary meeting of the party on Monday, media reports said.

In a video message after the meeting, the former Information Minister said PTI Chairman Imran Khan has decided that the PTI would not legitimise "this foreign-funded regime change" in Pakistan by taking part in the election of the Premier, Express Tribune reported.

"The parliamentary meeting of the PTI gave Imran Khan the complete authority to make decisions on the lawmakers' behalf."



Chaudhry said as per the directions of Imran Khan, no PTI lawmaker will vote in the election for the PM and after that, the PTI

MNAs will also send their resignations to the National Assembly Speaker.

He also acknowledged that there was a difference of opinion over the decision to resign en masse from the assembly but the parliamentary party gave Imran Khan the authority to make this decision who decided in favour of resignations, Express Tribune reported. Imran Khan claimed that there were two mega corruption cases against PML-N chief Shehbaz Sharif and it would be the "biggest insult to the country" to elect him as the Prime Minister of Pakistan.

Earlier in the day, PTI General Secretary Asad Umar, in a letter, told party lawmakers to vote for Shah Mehmood Qureshi else they will be considered defectors and disqualified under Article 63-A.

## 'China-Pak ties to be better under Shehbaz Sharif than even Imran'

Chinese state media has said that the Sharif family of Pakistan has been promoting bilateral ties for a long time, and cooperation between the two nation could be even better than under former Prime Minister Imran Khan.

Beijing | Agencies

Chinese state media has said that the Sharif family of Pakistan has been promoting bilateral ties for a long time, and cooperation between the two nation could be even better than under former Prime Minister Imran Khan.



When Shehbaz Sharif was regional leader of the eastern province of the Punjab, he struck many BRI cooperation deals with China directly to improve local infrastructure and economic development, and his family have maintained long-standing ties with China as his brother Nawaz Sharif is a three-time former Prime Minister and the leader who kicked off the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor project, said experts, Global Times reported. Experts from both China and Pakistan are confident in the future of the China-Pakistan ties, as they believe the new government will continue to uphold the country's long-standing tradition to make sure the friendship with China and all China-Pakistan cooperation projects will be unaffected, the report said.

## CHINA TO TAKE ON US AS SATELLITE IMAGERY OF NUKE MISSILE SILOS SHOWS INCREASED ACTIVITY

Beijing: China is expediting efforts to expand its nuclear arsenal as Beijing is seriously concerned about the threat posed by the US, a media report said.

According to The Wall Street Journal report, the Chinese leadership made a strategic decision to beef up the country's nuclear deterrence long before the current conflict in Ukraine. However, the latest events in Europe, as well as the increasingly confrontational rhetoric between Beijing and Washington over Taiwan, have prompted an acceleration of the programme, RT reported. As further proof of its claims, the report also cites satellite imagery of more than 100 suspected missile silos in one of China's western regions, where increased activity has been detected, RT reported. The newspaper surmises that these facilities could hold China's new long-range DF-41 missile, which was put into service in 2020. This type of missile can carry a nuclear warhead and is capable of reaching the US mainland, the report noted. According to the sources cited in the Journal report, the Chinese authorities now suspect that Washington's endgame is the toppling of the Chinese Communist Party, and that the US might be willing to take greater risks to stop China's rise. Additionally, Beijing is reportedly concerned that Washington could deploy its nukes should a military conflict break out over Taiwan. The report concludes by citing a retired Chinese military official, who said that "no matter how the situation develops in the future, the world will be more confrontational", meaning that "China definitely needs to maintain nuclear deterrence."

## Zelensky asks S.Korea for military equipment support

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on Monday asked South Korea for military equipment support to help his country fight against the ongoing Russian invasion.

Seoul | Agencies

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on Monday asked South Korea for military equipment support to help his country fight against the ongoing Russian invasion. Zelensky made the request in a virtual address before South Korean lawmakers, saying Ukraine needs various military technologies, including planes and tanks, reports Yonhap News Agency.

"The Republic of Korea can help Ukraine. South Korea has the various military equipment that can stop Russia's vessels and missiles," he said.

He thanked South Korea for the assistance it has provided so far but noted more will be needed in order for his country to survive and win the war.



"I would be grateful if the Republic of Korea could help us stand up against Russia... If Ukraine receives such weapons, not only will they save the lives of ordinary people, but it will be a chance to save Ukraine, and not only Ukraine, but ensure other countries are not attacked by Russia." Zelensky spoke for 15 minutes about the situation in his country, including the likely deaths of "at least tens of thousands" of people in the besieged city of Mariupol.

He warned Russia has no concern for the number of deaths and will stop at nothing unless the international community comes together, including by

cutting it off from the international banking system. "All countries have a right to independence. All cities have a right to live peacefully. All people have a right to not die in a war. This is what we are fighting for. This is what I ask you to join us in as we stand up to Russia."

Before concluding his address, Zelensky asked the lawmakers watch a short clip filmed by a journalist in Mariupol. The video showed the devastation in the city, including graphic images of weeping adults, dying children and bodies being thrown into mass graves.

"The road to the end is far," Zelensky said. "Russia does not plan to occupy only Ukraine. After Ukraine, Russia will certainly attack other countries."

The request came hours after South Korea's Defence Ministry reiterated its refusal to send lethal arms to Ukraine, citing "our security situation" and the "potential impact on our military's readiness posture".

The assistance South Korea has provided has consisted of 1 billion won (\$804,100) worth of non-lethal military supplies, such as bulletproof helmets and blankets, and medical items.

## UNDP joins B'desh efforts to accelerate economic growth

The UN Development Program (UNDP) and the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA) have deepened their partnership towards the implementation of an economic development program.

Dhaka | Agencies

The UN Development Program (UNDP) and the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA) have deepened their partnership towards the implementation of an economic development program. The two sides signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for the pro-

gramme titled "Future Nation", a new coalition of the government, private and development sectors, reports Xinhua news agency.

The programme was launched here with a view to accelerating the future national economic growth agenda by transforming the country's population into the key driving force of the economy and enabling them to achieve economic independence beyond borders. Sudipto Mukerjee, resident representative of UNDP in Bangladesh, and Md Ziaul Huq, director general of BIDA, signed the MoU on behalf of their respective sides in Dhaka. Salman Fazlur Rahman, Private Sector Industry and Investment Adviser to the Bangladeshi premier, attended the signing ceremony and highlighted the importance of the partnership between private, public and development sectors.



MUMBAI COURT REJECTS KIRIT SOMAIYA'S PRE-ARREST BAIL PLEA

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Sessions court on Monday rejected BJP leader Kirit Somaiya's anticipatory bail plea in the cheating case registered against him at Trombay police station earlier last week.

Last week, Kirit Somaiya and his son, BMC corporator Neil Somaiya moved the sessions court to seek anticipatory bail.

An order on Neil's plea will be pronounced on Tuesday.

Baban Bhimrao Bhosale, a 53-year-old former Army personnel, had lodged a complaint saying he had donated Rs 2,000 in 2013 to save INS Vikrant that was to be dismantled. It is alleged that Somaiya collected Rs 57 crore for the purpose and was to hand over the money to the state governor.

On Saturday, the Somaiyas did not appear before the police a day after they were summoned.

Advocate Vivekanand Gupta said the notice asking them to appear before the police on



Saturday at 11am was received only on Friday at 3pm. "However, since Kirit Somaiya had some prior programmes in Delhi, he had left the city on Thursday itself. He was not even given 24 hours' notice. We met the senior police inspector and requested her to give us a date post April 13. We will cooperate with the investigations," Gupta said.

PAWAR HOME ATTACK: MUMBAI POLICE IGNORED INTEL ALERTS

Three days after the shocking attack by MSRTC employees on Nationalist Congress Party chief Sharad Pawar's home, it has come to light that the Mumbai Police had got an intelligence alert at least 4 days prior to the incident.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Three days after the shocking attack by MSRTC employees on Nationalist Congress Party chief Sharad Pawar's home, it has come to light that the Mumbai Police had got an intelligence alert at least 4 days prior to the incident.

As per the intel inputs, a large number of Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation employees, including many women, were expected to reach Mumbai for the verdict of the Bombay High Court on April 5 and join the agitators already protesting at Azad Maidan.

There was strong possibility of protests being carried out at Pawars' Silver Oak bungalow and Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray's official and private residences, 'Varsha' at Malabar Hill and 'Matoshree' in Bandra east, respectively.



The advance intel alerted of similar agitation plans at the Bombay High Court, Mantralaya, Sahyadri State Guest House, and the official and private residence of Transport Minister Anil Parab. In view of these the inputs warned of a possible law and order situation in these areas, and recom-

mended beefing up security at the entry points to Mumbai like Dahisar, Vashi, Mulund and also railway stations. Soon after the April 8 attacks at Pawar's home, Home Minister Dilip Walse-Patil had announced a probe into the incident that spared a furore in political circles and embarrassed

the Maha Vikas Aghadi government of Shiv Sena-Nationalist Congress Party-Congress. Parab on Sunday said that those employees who were part of the attacks would be dismissed from service. Several NCP leaders like Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, Bharatiya Janata Party Leaders of Opposition Devendra Fadnis and Pravin Darekar had slammed the attacks and blamed the Mumbai Police and its failure of intelligence to take timely preventive measures.

Pointing fingers at the BJP, Sena MP Sanjay Raut said it was not an agitation but a well-planned attack on the Pawar family while Housing Minister Dr Jitendra Awhad said that the sinister intention was to inflict bodily harm to the NCP supremo.

Around 110 persons including the MSRTC employees lawyer Gunratn Sadavarte were arrested in connection with the incident.

FIRE AND OTHER SAFETY REGULATIONS IN BUILDINGS:

BOMBAY HC IRKED BY MAHARASHTRA GOVT'S COMPLETE APATHY

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Irked over complete inaction shown by the state government in finalising and implementing fire safety and other safety regulations in buildings vulnerable to man-made disasters, the Bombay High Court has observed that it has completely failed to exercise its duty for public interest.

A division bench of Chief Justice Dipankar Datta and Justice MG Sewlikar, on Monday, directed the Maharashtra government to amend the Development Plan 2034 to include safety regulations for buildings vulnerable to fire, and other man-made disasters.

The court has also directed the government to incorporate the special regulations both in the 2034 Development Control and Promotion Regulations (DCPR), and

the unified DCPR. "We direct the state to conduct a proper study and research and to take all steps to include the regulations and stipulations of the National Building Code in the DCPR 2034 and the Unified DCPR," said HC.

The judges were even unsatisfied with the government's explanation that they haven't been able to implement the safety regulations since 2008 due to a fire at the Mantralaya building in 2012, in which the concerned records were destroyed.

"The apathy of the state government is telling. The state in its affidavit, refers to a fire at Mantralaya in which all documents from 2009 were destroyed. The State says there was no deliberate omission on its part, but because of destruction of record due to the fire, the issue remained unaddressed," noted HC in its order.

The court further added: "We are

constrained to observe that this is yet another case where the state government has failed to justify its complete inaction. Notwithstanding the fire, the state didn't find it difficult to come up with the 2034 Development Plan."

The HC was hearing a PIL filed by advocates Abha Singh and Aditya Pratap Singh seeking enforcement of the safety regulations in buildings vulnerable to man-made disasters.

The government formulated the draft special safety regulations after the 26/11 terror attacks that took place in the city in 2008. These regulations were notified in February 2009, and soon after, the government called for objections and suggestions from the public. After public sent their suggestions and objections, nothing further was done.

The government informed the HC, in an affidavit, that it proposed

to constitute another expert panel to come up with fresh safety regulations that will factor in "advanced technology". The affidavit, filed by deputy director of Town Planning Shrikant Deshmukh, justified the inaction stating that its not as if the government has not deliberately addressed the issue, "but because of the documents/ decisions taken by the officers at the time, got destroyed (in Mantralaya fire), the issue never came up for consideration and hence the issue remained unaddressed." HC however, dismissed the submission saying that the state should have made earnest endeavours to implement the safety guidelines. It also took note of the National Building Code too provided for implementation of such safety norms. The HC has directed the government to report on the developments made by July 18.

BJP Leader Appears Before Mumbai Police In Bank Polls False Declaration Case

A case was filed against Maharashtra BJP's Pravin Darekar after an AAP leader alleged he had shown himself as a labourer to fight the directorship polls of a Mumbai-based cooperative bank.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra BJP leader Pravin Darekar appeared before Mumbai police on Monday to record his statement for the second time in a case of alleged false declaration in connection with a bank poll.

A case was filed against Mr Darekar after AAP leader Dhananjay Shinde alleged that the former had shown himself as a labourer to fight the directorship polls of a Mumbai-based cooperative bank.

An MRA Marg police station official said Mr Darekar appeared before police on Monday for the second time to record his statement. He had earlier appeared on April 4, the official added.

Darekar has been booked under IPC sections 199 (false statement made in declaration which is by law receivable as evidence), 200



(using as true such declaration knowing it to be false), 420 (cheating), 406 (criminal breach of trust), 465 (punishment for forgery), 468 (forgery for purpose of cheating), 120b (criminal conspiracy), and other sections of the Indian Penal Code.

THACKERAY WONDERS WHAT ISSUE BJP WOULD HAVE RAISED IN LORD RAMA'S ABSENCE

Mumbai: Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Sunday slammed the Bharatiya Janata Party saying that if Lord Rama would not have born what issue the BJP would have raised.

His remarks came while addressing a virtual campaign for Maha Vikas Aghadi's (MVA) candidate Jayashree Jadhav for the April 12 by-poll from the Kolhapur North seat.

"Today is Ram Navami. I wonder if Lord Ram would not have been born then, what issue the BJP would have raised in politics as they have no issue left. So, they keep communal issues at the forefront in politics," the chief minister said.

Thackeray said that BJP doesn't hold the patent on Hindutva.

"BJP leaders say that Shiv Sena has left Hindutva. It's not true, we have left BJP. BJP doesn't hold the patent on Hindutva and only BJP doesn't mean Hindutva either. BJP tried to create fake Hindu Hirdaya Samrat but people have not supported them." Thackeray said that the late Shiv Sena supremo Balasaheb Thackeray is the only "Hindu Hirdaya Samrat". "Your (BJP) saffron is fake, the real saffron of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj," he added.

Maha, Delhi girls bag bronze at Hungary Maths Olympiad

All four contestants representing India at the 11th European Girls' Mathematical Olympiad in Hungary have bagged bronze medals, an official said here on Monday.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

All four contestants representing India at the 11th European Girls' Mathematical Olympiad in Hungary have bagged bronze medals, an official said here on Monday.

The winners three Class XII students and one Class X student -- included two girls from Maharashtra and two sisters from Delhi.

They are: Ananya R. Ranade from Pune, Sanika A. Borade from Nashik, Anushka Aggarwal and Gunjan Aggarwal, both from Delhi. The students and were accompanied by their lead-



ers/observers including Aditi S. Phadke, Puklit Sinha and Rohinee Joshi. incidentally, Ananya and Anushka missed the silver by just one point at the EGMO-2022 held after two years owing to the pandemic. All the four winners shall return to India on Tuesday and will be accorded a felicitation at the Homi Bhabha Centre

for Science Education (HBCSE) in Mumbai on Wednesday morning. A premier research and development institution in science, technology and mathematics education, the HBCSE is India's nodal centre for Olympiads in maths, physics, chemistry, biology, astronomy and junior science.

Man dies after being hit by BEST bus, driver arrested

The BEST bus driver was arrested on charges of rash and negligent driving causing death and later granted bail by a magistrate court.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A 29-year-old man was killed in a road accident after his motorcycle was hit by an allegedly rashly driven BEST bus on Saturday evening in Mumbai's eastern suburbs, said the police. The BEST bus driver was arrested on charges of rash and negligent driving causing death and later granted bail by a magistrate court.

The incident took place around 8 pm on the Sion-Panvel Road near the Ashtavinayak building in the Mankhurd area. The deceased Karan Dumbre was a resident of Sandhurst Road and worked in an IT company in Kopar Khairane in Navi Mumbai. Dumbre's father Ramesh Dumbre, 63, a photographer, who is the complainant in the case, received a phone call from his daughter informing him that his son had met with an accident. A First Information Report (FIR) was registered by Trombay police against the BEST bus driver Vasant Pisal, 58, under sections 279, 337, 304 A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and sections 184 of the Motor Vehicles Act for rash and negligent driving causing death. Dumbre is survived by his wife, parents and sister.

Fight between two groups of different religions, 25 vehicles damaged

The state home minister said, "Appropriate legal action will be taken against those who instigate communal tensions in the state. Please cooperate with us to maintain communal harmony in Maharashtra."

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Two FIRs were registered at Mankhurd police station after a fight broke out between two groups belonging to different religions leading to over 25 vehicles being damaged in the incident. One person sustained minor injuries in the incident, police said.



There was police deployment in the Mhada colony area where the incident took place. Mumbai Police Commissioner Sanjay Pandey and other senior officers visited the spot on Monday morning.

An officer from Mankhurd police station said that around 10.30pm, eight persons on four bikes passed the area after visiting a Ram Navami function in nearby Chembur.

"As they were passing by a mosque, they started chanting slogans of Jai Sri Ram. Following this, some outside the mosque asked them to stop raising slogans at that

spot as prayers were ongoing at the mosque," inspector R Surve said.

This led to an argument between the two sides which escalated into a fight. One person on the bike was roughed up by the crowd outside the mosque, an officer said. The eight then left and returned within 20 minutes accompanied by a crowd of over 25 persons armed with rods and sticks.

"Since they could not find the crowd of people with whom they fought, they started destroying bikes, cars and autorickshaws that were present at the spot. The vehi-

cles belonged to locals belonging to both communities," the officer said. Later the police team reached and forced the crowd to disperse.

Later the local Mankhurd police registered two FIRs in the case. An officer said that one FIR pertained to the incident in which a biker was roughed up outside the mosque in which four persons were arrested. The second FIR was against the crowd of 25 persons who came later and damaged vehicles at the spot.

"Based on the CCTV footage that went viral of the vandalism, we have arrested

five persons including one BJP party worker and one associated with Bajrang dal. We are on the lookout for more accused in the two cases," an officer from Mankhurd police station added.

Responding to the incident, Maharashtra Home Minister Dilip Walse Patil said that action will be taken against those trying to give the incident a communal colour. He urged people of all communities to maintain peace and harmony, and help the police in upholding law and order in the state. He said that members of some political parties have been giving "provocative" statements, which could increase enmity between Hindus and Muslims.

The home minister said, "Appropriate legal action will be taken against those who instigate communal tensions in the state. Please cooperate with us to maintain communal harmony in Maharashtra."

MAN THREATENED, EXTORTED AFTER HE CONTACTS 'ESCORT SERVICE'

Mumbai: A 27-year-old man who contacted what appeared to be an escort service to enquire about the rates for massages was allegedly abused by an individual who also threatened to upload a photo of his wife on an adult website, before extorting Rs 1,000 from the victim, the police said. When the extortion continued even after he paid the money, the man approached Juhu police and an FIR was registered on April 9, they added.

Soon after, a person called the complainant on his mobile phone and sent photographs of a few women along with their rates, the complainant said. He called threatened to upload the wife's edited photo on an adult website along with the youth's mobile number, he added. The police said the FIR was registered under sections 384 (extortion) and 506 (criminal intimidation) of the Indian Penal Code and sections 66 C (identity theft) and 66 D (cheating by impersonation using computer resource) of the IT Act.

Mumbai logs 26 new Covid-19 cases, no fatality

All 26 patients are asymptomatic and none of them was hospitalised. A day before, Mumbai had reported 35 Covid-19 cases and zero fatalities

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Mumbai on Monday reported 26 fresh Covid-19 cases and zero fatalities due to the viral infection, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) said in its health bulletin.

Mumbai's Covid-19 tally stands at 10,58,442 and the death toll at 19,560 as of Monday.

All 26 patients are asymptomatic and none of them was hospitalised. A day before, Mumbai had reported 35 Covid-19 cases and zero fatalities.

With 18 more patients discharged after Covid-19 treatment, the number of recoveries in Mumbai has gone up to 10,38,569, the bulletin said.

Mumbai is now left with 313 active cases with a recovery rate of 98 per cent. The case positivity rate is 0.004 per cent, as per the health bulletin.

Generally, the city records



fewer cases on the first day of the week due to less number of Covid-19 tests.

In the last 24 hours, 5,234 samples were tested in Mumbai, taking the overall number of tests conducted so far to 1,67,25,124.

Mumbai's case doubling rate has reached 17,101 days, while the overall growth rate of cases for the period

between April 4 to April 11 stood at 0.004 per cent, the bulletin said.

With the significant improvement in the Covid-19 scenario in Mumbai, only 18 of the total 26,151 hospital beds remain occupied in the city. The metropolis has been free of sealed buildings and Covid-19 containment zones for a long time.



Delilah Belle Hamlin in salmon-colored backless gown at Daily Front Row Fashion Awards in Los Angeles.

## Simply Stunning

Los Angeles | Agencies

She rose to fame as a child on *Real Housewives Of Beverly Hills* with famous parents Lisa Rinna and Harry Hamlin. But Delilah Belle Hamlin's star is rising on her own.

The 23-year-old model absolutely stunned in a salmon-colored ensemble while attending the Daily Front Row Fashion Awards in Los Angeles on Sunday.

The Daily

Front Row Awards welcome celebrities in the fashion and entertainment world to honor stylists, gurus, fashion icons and more.

Delilah showed some skin in a pink silk halter dress featuring a backless design. The stunning number featured a knee-high length split which showed off her legs and her black heels.

She accessorized with a small black silk bag and had multiple rings on her fingers.

Her blonde tresses were pulled back as her bangs hung down in a middle-part.

Her make-up matched her dress as she donned pink blush along with a swipe of shiny lip.

Derek Blasberg hosted the event held at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel, A Four Seasons Hotel in Beverly Hills, California.



London | Agencies

Iconic biologist, natural historian, and broadcaster David Attenborough is all set to present a new show titled 'The Green Planet' that offers a deep insight into the secret, unexplored lives of plants, their evolution, and how they behave and interact.

The series is a BBC Earth project premiere on Sony BBC Earth on April 11, at 9 pm.

Each episode introduces a set of plants from deserts, tropical jungles, and underwater worlds to seasonal lands and our urban environment, enlightening viewers on how they hunt, forge inti-

### DAVID ATTENBOROUGH PRESENTS NEW SERIES 'THE GREEN PLANET'

Sony Pictures Networks'

said, "With the launch of Green Planet, we are thrilled to bring an unparalleled, first-of-its-kind experience that has not been explored yet. This show will not only provide viewers with an enriching experience but will also instill hope in them as they start seeing the world through a green lens."

mate relationships, deceive, communicate, act as caregivers, and fight for survival.

Talking about the show Tushar Shah, Chief Marketing Officer and Business Head - English Cluster & Sony AATH,

## Alicia Vikander says her 8-month-old son owns more clothes than her

Los Angeles | Agencies

'Tomb Raider' star Alicia Vikander says her wardrobe is in need of a serious update as her eight-month-old son Mark owns more clothes than her.

The 'Irma Vep' star admitted that she likes to pack lightly, which is likely influenced by the fact that growing up, her family didn't have a lot of luxuries, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

Speaking to Harper's Bazaar magazine, Alicia recalled being thrilled the first time she saw a pool at a hotel in Turkey when she was a teenager.

Vikander said: "I don't own much. (My son) has much more stuff than me right now."

She added that she generally packs just one suitcase containing "two pairs of jeans and three sweaters" when she travels.

The actress also explained that despite her modest childhood she considers her upbringing in Sweden to be "amazing".

"I had an amazing childhood. I'm fortunate to have a really solid base, emotionally, with friends and family la2m very close to."

Alicia said that even though she generally packs just a few outfits when travelling, she loves dressing up for red carpet events for her movies.

"I get excited about dressing up. People come and see us at a premiere dressed up and walking these carpets, and that's fun, of course. But that's the illusion of what the industry is. (But it's really) interest, and passion, and a will to make something. It's four months where a bunch of strangers work 15-hour days, six days a week, and don't sleep," she added.



## SIMON COWELL WAS DEPRESSED AFTER E-BIKE CRASH

Los Angeles | Agencies

Television personality Simon Cowell considered having therapy after feeling depressed when he broke his back in an e-bike crash in 2020. Cowell, who is engaged to his partner Lauren Silverman, told The Sun newspaper: "I considered therapy for the first time when I broke my back because I was very, very low. I felt very depressed because I didn't know how to explain it to Eric."

"I couldn't do all the things I wanted to with him. I wasn't sure if I was going to be able to walk again, to ever play football with him. That was a low point. I was on a lot of painkillers but I got off

them really quickly. I didn't want to go down that road."

He admits that the care from the doctors and support from his family helped him move on from the frightening accident, reports femalefirst.co.uk. The former 'X Factor' judge explained: "But in the end, I decided against therapy as I had great doctors, Lauren was amazing, and Eric was incredible. "I'm still wearing a back brace which I have to wear when I go out on my bike, and there are pretty big screws in my back, and that's for life. But I'm here, I'm alive. And I'm grateful." Cowell also revealed that he has stopped having Botox on his face and says he is now adopting a healthy diet to stave off signs of ageing.

## Will Poulter warns method actors over 'inappropriate behaviour'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actor Will Poulter thinks method acting has been used as an "excuse" for inappropriate behaviour.

He explained: "When it comes to an actor's process, whatever that is, so long as it doesn't infringe on other people's and you're being considerate, then fine. But if your process creates an inhospitable environment, then to me you've lost sight of what's important."

"Method acting shouldn't be used as an excuse for inappropriate behaviour - and it definitely has."

Poulter has recently been preparing to star in 'Guardians of the Galaxy 3', reports femalefirst.co.uk.

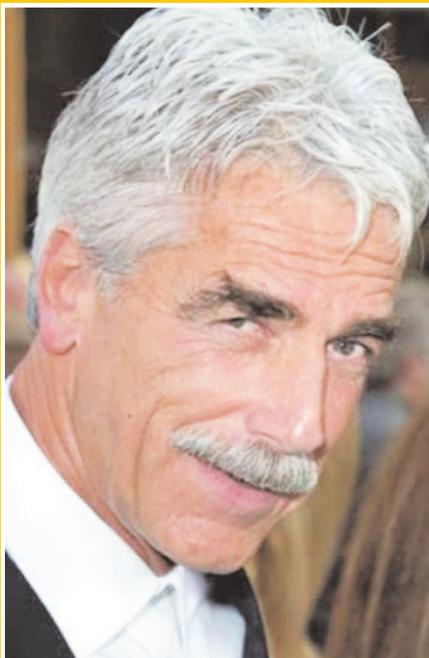
As part of his preparations, he's been forced to change his diet to achieve his "aesthetic goals".

He told The Independent: "It's difficult talking about it because with Marvel it's all secret squirrel, but the most important thing is that your mental and physical health has to be number one, and the aesthetic goals have to be secondary, otherwise you end up promoting something that is unhealthy and unrealistic if you don't have the



financial backing of a studio paying for your meals and training. I'm in a very privileged position in that respect, and I wouldn't recommend anyone do what I did to get ready for that job."

Asked what his preparation entailed, Will replied: "It's been a lot of gym work and a very, very specific diet." Poulter then elaborated on the keys to his recent transformation.



Los Angeles | Agencies

Actor Sam Elliott expressed his regret for voicing strong criticism for Jane Campion's western 'The Power of the Dog' on Sunday afternoon, extending apologies to Jane Campion, Benedict Cumberbatch and the gay community.

Elliott offered his comments during a promotional panel for his series '1883', a spin-off of 'Yellowstone' for Paramount+, featured in Deadline's Contenders TV event, reports 'Variety'.

"I wasn't very articulate about it. I didn't articulate it very well," Elliott said.

"I said some things that hurt people and I feel terrible about that... I (said) that I thought Jane Campion was a brilliant

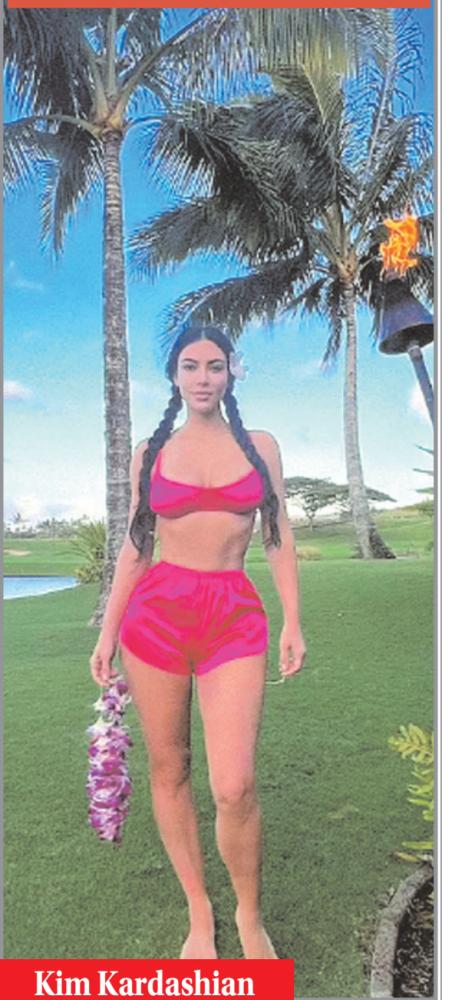
## SAM ELLIOTT APOLOGISES FOR 'THE POWER OF THE DOG' CRITICISM

director. I want to apologise to the cast of 'The Power of the Dog' -- brilliant actors all, in particular Benedict Cumberbatch... I can only say that I'm sorry and I am. I am."

Elliott went on to apologise for how his comments were received by the gay community.

"The gay community has been incredible to me my entire career. And I mean by entire career, from before I got started in this town. Friends on every level, in every job description -- up until today, with my agent, my dear friend of a number of years. I'm sorry that I hurt any of those friends and someone I loved and anyone else by the words that I used," Elliott continued.

## ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Kim Kardashian



## 12 teams confirmed to get automatic qualification for ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024

Dubai | Agencies

The International Cricket Council Board has announced the qualification route to both the Men's and Women's T20 World Cup in 2024, with 12 teams confirmed to get automatic qualification in the men's tournament, to be co-hosted by the West Indies and the United States.

The ICC also confirmed South Africa as the host of the inaugural ICC U-19 Women's T20 World Cup 2023. The top eight teams from the 2022 T20 World Cup in Australia

along with hosts West Indies and the US, and the next highest-ranked teams on the ICC Men's T20 rankings table as on November 14, 2022 will get automatic qualification for the 2024 men's tournament. If the West Indies finish among the top eight in Australia later this year, three teams will progress based on rankings. If the Caribbean side finishes outside the top eight, only two teams will qualify from the rankings table. Since the tournament will feature 20 teams, the remaining eight spots will be decided through a regional qualification process. Africa, Asia and Europe each will

have two spots open, while the Americas and East Asia Pacific (EAP) will have one each. For the Women's T20 World Cup 2024, eight countries will book berths to the showpiece event automatically, including the top three teams from each group of the 2023 event besides the host (if not in the six) and the next highest-ranked team(s) on the ICC Women's T20 rankings table at a pre-determined date. The remaining two teams will be determined through the Women's T20 World Cup global qualifier. The eight-team ICC Women's Cricket World Cup in 2025

will see the five highest-placed teams at the end of the 2022-25 ICC Women's Championship (IWC) qualify automatically alongside the host which is yet to be confirmed. The remaining two teams will be identified through a global qualifying event between the four bottom-placed teams in the IWC, besides an additional two teams from the ODI rankings. The inaugural ICC U-19 Women's T20 World Cup 2023 will be staged in January next year as a 16-team event. The 41-match event will be hosted by South Africa, who were also the inaugural hosts of the Men's T20 World Cup in 2007.



### IPL 2022

## WILLIAMSON'S FIFTY SEALS 8-WICKET WIN FOR SRH OVER LSG

Navi Mumbai | Agencies

A measured half-century by captain Kane Williamson sealed Sunrisers Hyderabad's eight-wicket win over Gujarat Titans at the D.Y. Patil Stadium to record their second successive win of the tournament.

After the bowlers conceded 44 runs and took three wickets in the last five overs to restrict Gujarat to 162/7, Williamson led the chase with 57 off 46 balls, laced with two fours and four sixes and found support coming from Abhishek Sharma's 42 and Nicholas Pooran doing the finishing job with an unbeaten 34. The chase began with Williamson beaten on the inside edge off Mohammed Shami and was struck on pads. Hardik Pandya consulted keeper Matthew Wade but eventually didn't go for a review. But replays later showed that Williamson would have been out.

Hyderabad's slow start of 11 runs in the first four overs changed dramatically with Williamson pulling Shami for a four and six off the first two balls of the fifth over. Sharma took on Lockie Ferguson, smashing four glorious boundaries



through off-side as Hyderabad took 31 runs off the last two overs of power-play. Sharma slammed Rashid Khan for boundaries through extra cover and backward point. But the leg-spinner bounced back by breaking the 64-run opening stand as Sharma holed out to deep mid-wicket. Williamson, who had conserved all his energy till the 12th over, slammed Pandya for pulled back-to-back sixes to take 16 runs off the over. After hitting a six off Rahul Tewatia, Rahul Tripathi had to retire hurt due to muscle cramps in his leg. But it didn't deter Hyderabad as Williamson reached his fifty in 42

balls by moving across and using the pace of the ball off Ferguson to scoop over short fine leg. He followed it up with a crisp drive through the gap between cover and mid-off. But in the next over, Williamson skied an off-cutter from Pandya straight to mid-on. Ferguson's horror night went worse as he dropped a tough chance of Nicholas Pooran off his own bowling. He was then punished by the left-handed batter for straying twice in his line, flicked through fine leg for four followed by a picked-up six over fine leg. Pooran then went for a pull off Shami but the top-edge sailed over Wade's head for four before Aiden Markram levelled the scores with a crisp drive down the ground. Pooran finished off the chase with a majestic pull off Nalkande over backward square leg fence to end Gujarat's clean slate in the tournament.

#### Brief scores:

Gujarat Titans 162/7 in 20 overs (Hardik Pandya 50 not out, Abhinav Manohar 35; T Natarajan 2/34, Bhuvneshwar Kumar 2/37) lost to Sunrisers Hyderabad (Kane Williamson 57, Abhishek Sharma 42; Hardik Pandya 1/27, Rashid Khan 1/28)

## Title race wide open as Man City, Liverpool share 4 goals in Premier League

London | Agencies

Manchester City and Liverpool drew 2-2 in the game of the week in the Premier League to see City keep their one-point lead over their rivals for this season's title.

A thrilling game saw Pep Guardiola's City open the scoring thanks to Kevin de Bruyne's deflected shot in the fifth minute, although Liverpool needed just eight minutes to replay with Diogo Jota's finish after good work from Trent Alexander Arnold and Andy Robertson on Sunday night. It ended 2-2 to leave the title race still wide open. Chelsea recovered from painful home defeats against Brentford and Real Madrid with a 6-0 win away to Southampton on Saturday afternoon. Thomas Tuchel's men, looking like a team with something to prove, were 3-0 up by the 21st minute with goals from



Marcos Alonso, Mason Mount and Timo Werner.

Tottenham strengthened their claim for a top-four finish thanks to Heung Min Son's hat-trick and some excellent first-half saves from Hugo Lloris that saw them win 4-0 away to Aston Villa. Dejan Kulusevski also scored for Spurs, for whom Harry Kane was excellent despite not scoring. Arsenal remain fifth, but lose ground after a shock 2-1 defeat at home to Brighton, who took a two-goal lead thanks to Leandro Trossard on 28 minutes and Enoch Mwepu, before Martin Odegaard's late consolation for Arsenal. Everton's win

gained extra importance 24 hours later as the bottom of the table Norwich beat Burnley 2-0 at Carrow Road, with goals from Pierre Lees-Melou after nine minutes and Teemu Puuki in the 86th minute denying Burnley the chance to remain within a point of Everton.

Leeds United look safe from relegation after Raphinha, Rodrigo and Jack Harrison gave Jesse Marsch's men a 3-0 away win to condemn Watford to an eighth successive home league defeat while lifting Leeds nine-points clear of the bottom three. Brentford punished West Ham's tired legs after Thursday's European game against Olympique Lyon as they won their London derby 2-0.

Newcastle United can also breathe much easier after Chris Wood's second-half penalty gave them a 1-0 win at home to Wolverhampton.

## MotoGP 2022: Marquez steals the show in Austin with a scintillating recovery

Texas | Agencies

An Americas GP masterclass was put on by Marc Marquez as he carved through the field, overcoming a problem at the start to show what he and the Honda RC213V are capable of. Pol Espargaro dug deep to conquer illness and net more points.

The King of COTA may not have walked away with another crown, but a heroic recovery after problems on the start line showed that Marc Marquez has lost none of his speed or talent - especially in Texas.

A technical problem at the start, which Honda HRC are investigating, saw Marquez drop back from ninth on the grid. Arriving last into Turn One, the seven-time Americas GP winner put the start behind and began his comeback through the field with unrelenting efficiency. By the end of the first lap, the #93 had already made up six places and would continue with the lap times of the race leaders. As the race entered its second half, Marquez continued to increase his pace, improving on the fastest lap of the race on multiple occasions as he reeled in the likes of Quartararo, Martin and Bagnaia. Firmly inside the top ten, the Repsol Honda Team rider spent the closing laps fending off a ferocious Fabio Quartararo who launched a late counter-attack. Welcomed back to the garage with a round of applause by the team, Marquez's champion spirit shone through as he was left



wanting more from a race that promised so much. Sixth place moves Marquez to 13th in the championship points table, 40 points behind World Championship leader and Americas GP race winner Enea Bastianini. Although sixth left him unfulfilled, Marquez leaves America with renewed and refreshed confidence upon his return from injury.

On the other side of the Repsol Honda Team garage, Pol Espargaro's incredible physical effort was rewarded with a handful of points for 13th place.

### SA vs BAN Test series

## Maharaj stars with 332-run win

Gqeberha (S.Africa) | Agencies

Left-arm spinner Keshav Maharaj hit Bangladesh hard with his second seven-wicket haul of the series as South Africa clinched a crushing 332-run win over Bangladesh in the second and final Test at St George's Park on Monday to seal the series 2-0. Maharaj's 7/40 was supported by off-spinner Simon Harmer taking 3/34.

Bangladesh's resistance lasted just around an hour on day four as Maharaj and Harmer ran through the batting line-up, bowling out the visitors for just 80 in 23.3 overs. The series win means South Africa harden their grip on the second position in the ICC Men's World Test Championship table, with a points percentage of 71.42 while Bangladesh are second from the bottom with 16.66 percentage of points.

The start of day four wasn't the best for South Africa as opener Sarel Erwee and all-rounder Wiaan Mulder tested positive for Covid-19 and were replaced by debutant Khaya Zondo



and Glenton Sturman. Resuming from 27/3, Bangladesh lost their veteran batters, Mushfiqur Rahim and Mominul Haque, in consecutive Maharaj overs. Rahim survived a few close shaves against Harmer but against Maharaj, he went for an

adventurous cover drive and edged to captain Dean Elgar at slip. It was then Mominul Haque's turn to fall to Maharaj, sweeping straight to square leg.

Yasir Ali didn't look to hang around and went for a big slog-sweep but

holed out to deep mid-wicket for a duck off Harmer. Liton Das and Mehidy Hasan Miraz stitched a 25-run stand. But Das came out of the crease off Maharaj and was stumped by Kyle Verreynne.

From there onwards, the result was a foregone conclusion as Maharaj took Mehidy Hasan Miraz and Khaled Ahmed in quick succession. With his second seven-wicket haul of the series, Maharaj became the first player in Test history to complete two seven-fors in the fourth innings of back-to-back Test matches.

Harmer finished off the game by trapping Taijul Islam for a duck, ending Bangladesh's misery. Maharaj was the unanimous choice for the Player of the Match award and also took home the Player of the Series crown for an overall tally of 16 wickets in the series.

#### Brief scores:

South Africa 453 and 176 for 6 dec beat Bangladesh 217 and 80 all out in 23.3 overs (Liton Das 27, Keshav Maharaj 7/40, Simon Harmer 3/34) by 332 runs

## FIH Hockey Women's Junior World Cup: India to take on England in bronze medal match

Potchefstroom (South Africa) | Agencies

After losing the semifinal to the Netherlands 0-3, the Indian are now focused on their all-important bronze medal match against England on Tuesday in the FIH Hockey Women's Junior World Cup.

The Salima Tete-led Indian team rued missed chances against the Netherlands in the semifinals. Tete said that the team has had a fruitful discussion post their semifinal debacle and are now focused on the task at hand.

"There is no point thinking about what's happened in the past. Now we need to be absolutely focused on the upcoming match against England. Getting off to a good start against them will definitely give us the right momentum and that is what we will be looking for against them," Tete said.

"We are quite disappointed from our match against



Netherlands. We created so many chances but could not convert. It just felt like it wasn't our day," she said.

England, meanwhile, come into the bronze medal match after a 0-8 loss to Germany in the semifinal on Sunday. They were the table toppers from

pool B, having beaten South Africa and Ireland convincingly. In the quarterfinal they got the better of USA 2-1 in a thrilling encounter where England recovered from an early setback, having conceded a goal in the 3rd minute.

## BABAR AZAM, RACHAEL HAYNES EMERGE ICC PLAYERS OF THE MONTH FOR MARCH

Dubai: Pakistan's all-format skipper Babar Azam, and Australia's run-machine Rachael Haynes have been named the ICC Men's and Women's Players of the Month for March by the International Cricket Council (ICC) on Monday.

Azam had several thrilling batting displays in Pakistan's multi-format series against Australia recently. He amassed 390 runs in the three-Test series, which the hosts lost 0-1.

Rachael Haynes had a formidable set of displays on the road to Australia's seventh ICC Women's Cricket World Cup trophy. She scored 429 runs in eight games at an average of 61.28, her feats at the top of the order proving crucial to her side's unbeaten run to the final, where they thrashed England to lift the trophy at Christchurch in New Zealand. Her 130 against England in the opening game set the tone for a dominant unbeaten run to the final, while her other standout performance came in the form of a class 85 during the semifinal win against the West Indies.



## ICC foresees Ashwin's tactic to become a regular fixture in 20-over cricket

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Rajasthan Royals' director of cricket and head coach, Sri Lankan great Kumar Sangakkara, is mighty pleased with Ravichandran Ashwin's "sacrifice" for the team's cause, after the cricketer retired himself out in the match against Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) on Sunday to allow a better finisher to come in and tonk the ball a few times to boost their score.

Whether it had been planned by Ashwin or not, but after pushing Avesh Khan to cover for a single, he kept running after completing the run and stopped only after reaching the dressing room. The fact that Riyan Parag walked out to bat straightaway means the team was expecting such a move from Ashwin.

Ashwin's batting partner at that time, Shimron Hetmyer struck Khan for sixes of successive deliveries and Parag



too struck a big six before getting out, going for another big one off the penultimate delivery of the match to boost RR's score to 165 for six.

The winners of the inaugural IPL edition then restricted LSG to 162/8 for a narrow three-run win.

The successful tactic used by the Royals in the IPL in Sunday's game at Wankhede has won praise and could become a regular fixture in 20-over cricket prior to the ICC Men's T20 World Cup later this year, felt ICC on Monday.



# Akansha Singh: Fascinating to see Ajay Devgn direct and act at the same time

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Akansha Singh who is playing a pivotal role in the upcoming film 'Runway 34', directed by and starring Ajay Devgn along with the legendary Amitabh Bachchan, says it was quite fascinating for her to see how the actor-filmmaker was multitasking on the set.

Akansha is playing the wife of Captain Vikrant Khanna played by Ajay.

Asked about sharing screen space with Ajay, Akansha told IANS: "It was quite fascinating for me to watch how Ajay sir was directing and acting in the same scene. Of course, it was not easy, especially in some of those action sequences. But Ajay sir is a master in it I guess because he was handling multi-tasking with so much ease."

During the shooting of the film, the actress had a leg injury and had to shoot some of the sequences with her plaster on.

Sharing how cooperative the whole cast and crew were, Akansha said, "throughout that time, I was in a wheelchair but Ajay sir and all our crew members were so supportive. In one of the plane sequences, when I was almost immobile, they picked me up and put me in the place and stood by me throughout, including Ajay sir. It is my first big project in Bollywood and this is such a special memory."

Starting her career in theatre, making her screen debut with the TV serial 'Na Bole Tum Na Maine Kuch Kaha', Akansha always had a wish to work with Amitabh Bachchan. "I remember meeting him for the first time on the set of the film. Though I did not have a dialogue with him, I told him how happy I am just sharing screen space with him. He smiled and asked me what happened to my legs, and how I am commuting on the set to the hotel."

"When he got to know I am using a walker, the next day he got me a bugge and said, 'Use this, it is better and more comforting.' Such gesture says a lot about the kind-hearted man he is," shared Akansha.



## LIP LOCK MOMENT OF SAISHA SHINDE & MANDANA KARIMI

Team Absolute | Mumbai

'Lock Upp' inmate Saisha Shinde kissed Mandana Karimi on her lips on the show. During a task, each member of the blue and orange teams was asked to pick someone they would like to 'kiss' in which 'Kaidis' were required to

stamp other kaidi they liked with lipstick.

Saisha decided to kiss Mandana as she likes her. She also confessed that she finds Mandana "attractive and hot". Saisha ended up kissing Mandana on her lips. The entire lip lock moment between the two grabbed eyeballs.

Meanwhile, Vinit Kakar has been eliminated from the show. He entered the show in the outfit of a doctor. He was at the bottom of the charge sheet. When he was asked to take the name of the weakest contestant he had taken his name. Other contestants also called him the weakest and took his name.

## PUJA AGARWAL: WOULD LIKE TO PLAY A STRONG CHARACTER RATHER THAN A BOLD ONE

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Puja Agarwal, who will be seen in the web series 'Ballia Kaand' soon, says that she always picks up roles that are meaty and strong. The actress, who has also done short films such as 'Mirror', 'Fear of God' and 'Happy Anniversary', adds that bold scenes are something that she is wary of.

"The script needs to really convince me that a bold scene is required at that point. I would like to play a strong character rather than a bold one. In the past, I have said no to many of them. In my series, there are bold scenes but not for my character. Though Maya is very bold, fearless in her character," she says.

Talking about her character, she adds: "I am playing Maya, who's a strong lady. She is the wife of Daara, the main villain, played by Harry Josh. Maya is someone who is not afraid of her husband and dominates over him."



## It's going to be a career changer for me:

## GEETIKA MEHANDRU ON UPCOMING FILM

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Geetika Mehandru talks about her latest project 'Jersey' and shares her excitement about its theatrical release.

Starring Shahid Kapoor in the lead role, the movie was earlier supposed to release on December 29 last year. However, makers of the sports drama had decided to postpone the theatrical release of the film after civil restrictions were reimposed due to fears over the Omicron variant.

Now that the Covid situation is stable in the country, makers have finally decided to release the movie in theaters. Speaking on the same, Geetika says:

"The more excited you are for something, the more it gets delayed. This is exactly happening with me in 'Jersey'. It is my dream project. This project is something that is very close to my heart and is surely going to be a career changer for me."

Geetika who's playing the character of a journalist in the movie continues: "With each passing day, I am getting butterflies in my stomach. But I have decided not to get very happy before the release. Once it gets released, me and my whole cast are surely going to have fun and party."



## YASH APOLOGY AT PRESS EVENT WINS RESPECT

Team Absolute | Hyderabad

With south India's next biggie 'KGF: Chapter 2' marching towards its April 14 release, the makers and star are literally racing against the clock to publicise the magnum opus.

Arriving late for a media interaction, Yash, who plays Rocky Bhaay in the movie, had to face the ire of a journalist at the event on Monday.

Yash did not hesitate to apologise, and convinced the journalist that he had not been aware of the timings, but was simply following the team's schedule.

"I know the value of time. So, please accept my sorry, as I was not aware of the exact timings you people were called here for an interactive session", Yash said.

Elaborating further, Yash explained that they have been travelling by private jet, which requires permission with respect to the weather conditions, thus causing a mix-up in their schedules. Yash's humility in this particular situation has drawn much positivity for him among the folks.

Earlier during the promotions of Sukumar's directorial 'Pushpa', Allu Arjun faced the same situation, as he was juggling between cities for the movie's publicity. Allu Arjun had quoted a similar reason, when a journalist posed a question on his punctuality in Bengaluru.

'KGF: Chapter 2' is gearing up for its worldwide release on April 14. Helmed by Prashanth Neel, the 'KGF' franchise is one of the most-hyped productions of the Kannada film industry.



## This is the time to unite: AR Rahman on north-south debate

Team Absolute | Chennai

Pointing out that it was very easy to divide people through art, Oscar-winner and one of India's top music directors A.R. Rahman said that this was the time to unite and to celebrate differences.

Speaking at the CII-DAKSHIN South India Media and Entertainment Summit, where he was honoured with the Icon award, Rahman recalled an incident that had occurred in Malaysia seven years ago.

"I had gone to Malaysia some seven years ago. There, a nice Chinese gentleman told me, 'You are from India?' I like India. I like North India better. They are more fair.

He said, "Their movies are much more charming."

The music director said that the gentleman's comments got him thinking and it made him wonder if the man had actually watched south Indian movies and why he made such a statement.

"It deeply disturbed me. Then, I discovered that what we need to do is we need to cast people with colour. Make them empowering and give them characters which will give them dignity. This is the most important thing that south Indians can do because we love our colour," he said.

Rahman also went on to make it clear that be it south India or north India, India

was India.

"For me, it doesn't matter. Somebody does good here, north India benefits. Somebody does good there, we benefit. The borders are broken. If you look at Netflix, people watch Malayalam movies, Tamil movies everything... The borders are broken but we need to empower ourselves definitely. And through art, it is much more easier," he said.

Rahman said, "Imagination should not be just for South Indians. Just for our culture. You need to show the world what minds we are and what culture we have in the most international way," the music director pointed out before concluding his speech with a point on unity.



Shweta Bajpai